



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 1263

February 23, 2021

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: HOUSE BILL 1263 – MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – COVID–19 VACCINATION PLAN

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1263.

HB 1263 would require the Maryland Department of Health to develop a vaccination plan for COVID-19 including a timetable and certain metrics, as well as an education campaign regarding COVID-19 vaccines, specifying how to register for a vaccine dose and the vaccines' safety/efficacy.

BCA believes HB 1263 is needed to ensure additional local government have greater insight with respect to the state's COVID-19 planning. In Baltimore City, a lack of prior knowledge and local input has resulted in critical gaps in vaccination infrastructure, including information technology lapses resulting in missed or over-booked appointments and insufficient vaccine doses. Additional issues have arisen over the inequitable distribution of COVID-19-related resources across racial and socioeconomic divides.

Between December 29, 2020 and February 7, 2021, the Baltimore City Health Department administered 8,877 COVID-19 vaccine doses. With limited input regarding vaccine eligibility, only 27.27% of said doses were delivered to Black residents, and only 20.78% were delivered to individuals aged 60 years or older. Additional planning and coordination at the state level, along with significantly more local input, is a necessary step to ensure these communities, with the former comprising the majority of Baltimore City's population, are equitably served.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 1263.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/>*